



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
LANSING



DAN WYANT
DIRECTOR

September 17, 2012

Dr. Susan Hedman, Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard (R-19J)
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3590

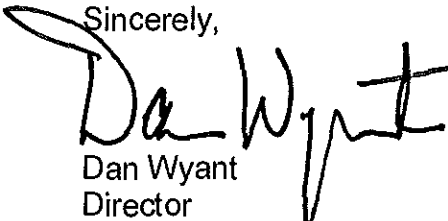
Dear Dr. Hedman:

The Marquette County Road Commission's (Road Commission) application to build County Road 595 has been closely examined by our respective staff over the past eight months. The Road Commission has been responsive to the concerns expressed in Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) correspondence with them, including the USEPA's April 23, 2012, objection letter. At USEPA's August 28, 2012, public hearing in Marquette, local elected officials expressed overwhelming support for this road, which will reduce truck traffic in populated areas while improving access to a remote part of northwest Marquette County. While that support was far from unanimous at the hearing, the voice of the elected representatives of the local populace speaks to the benefits of this road. As director of the MDEQ, I believe the improvements to the Road Commission's proposal since last April have brought this project to the point that Michigan will soon be in a position to issue a permit under state authorities. Any permit that MDEQ issues will be appropriately conditioned to ensure that all USEPA objections will be fully resolved. I urge the USEPA to remove their objection to Michigan's issuance of a permit for this important project.

USEPA and MDEQ regulators have diligently reviewed this application and provided input to the Road Commission, including the USEPA's objection letter. The objection was based on concerns with the alternative analysis, impact analysis, and compensatory mitigation in the Road Commission's January 2012 application. The Road Commission has since made significant improvements to their application. Those improvements include clarification and amplification of the alternatives analysis that demonstrate the proposed route is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative to achieve the project purpose. Impacts have also been effectively minimized. The Road Commission's application now includes reduced impacts to streams via shorter and wider stream crossings or bridges. The road footprint has been narrowed or removed across the rare and imperiled wetlands to minimize impacts. The proposed route has been modified in several locations to avoid critical wetlands and further reduce overall impacts. Other concerns expressed in the USEPA's objection

letter will be addressed by conditioning of any permit the state issues. This will include a comprehensive plan for monitoring and minimizing wildlife collisions and invasive species monitoring and eradication. Finally, the mitigation plan has been significantly improved, now consisting of preservation of a large, critical tract of land adjacent to the McCormick Wilderness.

In closing, I urge the USEPA to remove their objection to the MDEQ issuing a permit for construction of Marquette County Road 595. Please contact me if you wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Dan Wyant
Director
517-373-7917

cc: Mr. James Goodheart, Senior Policy Advisor, MDEQ
Mr. William Creal, MDEQ
Mr. Mike Masterson, MDEQ
Mr. Steve Casey, MDEQ